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Mahon[10] as a bowlder in the bed of the Satlej River near Wangtu in the N. W. Himalayas. It is regarded as a product of contact action. Its original form is thought to have been diabasic or basaltic.

In the pre-Cretaceous, Cretaceous and Eocene beds of northwestern Oregon, Diller[11] finds glaucophane schists, sandstones, limestones, basalts, tuffs and shales.

The granophyres of Strath, Skye, according to Harker[12] are filled with gabbro inclusions where they intrude a great mass of volcanic agglomerate. They are denser and darker than the normal granophyres lying north of them, in which no basic inclusions are known. The gabbro debris in the granophyres is more or less dissolved, those fragments that have most nearly disappeared being represented by isolated grains of augite, hypersthene, altered olivine, magnetite and occasionally plagioclase. The pyroxenes have suffered greater or less change into hornblende and the olivine into pilitic amphibole. The new rock formed differs from the normal granophyre in its structure, in that it appears to contain nests of secondary minerals. Other fragments besides gabbro were also noticed in the same rock.

In the course of an article on the mineral deposits of the Central Alps, Weinschenk[13] describes the granite, gneiss, aplite, lamprophyre, mica-schists, quartzite, amphibolite, serpentine and other rocks of the Hohen Tanern.

BOTANY.[1]

The Metric System in Botany.—The recent appearance of two very important works on North American botany, viz., "Gray's Synoptical Fora of North America, Vol. I, part I" and "Britton and Brown's Illustrated Flora of the Northeastern United States and Canada, Vol. I," in which the English units of measurement are used throughout, suggests the necessity of some missionary work among American botanists. Can it be possible that the botanists of this country are the most conservative of our scientific men? We take part from time to time in the action of the American Association for the Advancement of Science, in which in vigorous and logical sentences

[10] Min. Magazine, XI, p. 141.
[11] 17th Ann. Rept. U. S. Geol. Survey, Pt. 1, p. 14–16.
[12] Quart. Jour. Geol. Soc., May, 1896, p. 320.
[13] Zeitschr. f. Kryst., XXVI, p. 22.
[1] Edited by Prof. C. E. Bessey, University of Nebraska, Lincoln, Nebraska.

we express our admiration for the metric system and our conviction that the United States Congress is derelict toward this important matter. We urge Congress to make the use of this system compulsory, and yet we go on calmly writing books in which we use the most antiquated of measuring units. Not content with using feet and inches, we express fractions of inches in lines! We vote enthusiastically that mechanics, surveyors, farmers, statisticians and schoolmasters shall use the metric system exclusively, and yet we, the botanists, who of course are "the salt of the earth" are slow in doing what we so urgently recommend others to do. The writer hereof must plead guilty to his full share of blame in this matter in the past, but he wishes to assure his botanical friends that he does not intend to inflict a long suffering public with any work whose use will *compel* a retention of the old units, as in the case of the books referred to above. Nor are these the only books which offend in this important matter; they are singled out because of their great excellence in other respects, and also because such an anachronism was not to be expected in them. Following their lead, however, we may look for many little books with English units; thus it happens that the very books which should familiarize the people with the metric system, the semi-popular and popular books, serve to perpetuate an obsolescent, and what we say we hope will soon be an obsolete system.

It is not necessary to point out the commendable exceptions to the rule; we may, however, mention the botanical publications of the United States National Herbarium, all of whose contributions, if we mistake not, conform rigidly in this respect to the demands of modern science.

The writer would urge that every botanical writer insist upon the use of metric measurements throughout, in some cases with the English equivalents in parentheses, and that the editors of our botanical journals and other scientific journals in which botanical papers are published lead the way in requiring conformity to this rule. If our academies of science and other scientific societies also will insist upon the use of metric units, the present humiliating condition will rapidly disappear.

CHARLES E. BESSEY.

Eaton and Faxon's North American Sphagna.—A short time ago a most important distribution of Peat mosses (*Sphagnaceæ*) was made by Mr. George F. Eaton. In 1893, Professor D. C. Eaton and Edwin Faxon announced the intended preparation of a set of dried specimens of all the North American species. Since that time

the work has gone forward, retarded greatly by the death of Professor Eaton in 1895, whose son then undertook to bring it to completion. It is now issued under the title "Sphagna Boreali-Americana Exsiccata," and includes 172 numbers representing 39 species, distributed as follows:

I. ACUTIFOLIA.—*S. girgensohnii* Russ., *S. fimbriatum* Wils., *S. russowii* Warnst., *S. warnstorffi* Russ., *S. tenellum* (Schimp) Warnst. *S. fuscum* (Schimp) Klinggr., *S. quinquefarium* (Braithw.) Warnst., *S. acutifolium* (Ehrh., e. p.) Russ. and Warnst., *S. subnitens* Russ. and Warnst., *S. tenerum* (Aust.) Warnst., *S. molle* Sulliv. (62 specimens, representing many varieties).

II. SQUARROSA.—*S. teres* Angstr., *S. squamosum* Pers. (10 specimens and several varieties).

III. POLYCLADA.—*S. wulfianum* Girg. (3 specimens including two varieties).

IV. CUSPIDATA.—*S. macrophyllum* Bernh., *S. floridanum* (Aust.) Card., *S. lindbergii* Schimp., *S. riparium* Angstr., *S. cuspidatum* (Ehrh.) Russ. and Warnst., *S. dusenii* (C. Jens) Russ. and Warnst., *S. recurvum* (Beauv.) Russ. and Warnst., *S. fitzgeraldi* Renauld, *S. molluscum* Bruch. (39 specimens, including many varieties).

V. RIGIDA.—*S. compactum* DC., *S. garberi* Lesq. and James. (8 specimens, including several varieties).

VI. SUBSECUNDA.—*S. pylaesii* Brid., *S. obesum* Wils., *S. subsecundum* Nees, *S. platyphyllun* Warnst., *S. contortum* Schultz, *S. rufescens* Bryol. Germ., *S. orlandense* Warnst., *S. microcarpum* Warnst. (26 specimens, including many varieties).

VII. CYMBIFOLIA.—*S. portoricense* Hampe, *S. imbricatum* (Hornsch.) Russ., *S. cymbifoliam* Ehrh., *S. papillosum* Lindb., *S. medium* Limpr., *S. ludovicianum* (Ren. and Card.) Warnst. (24 specimens, including many varieties).

A personal examination of this set shows it to be in every way satisfactory, the specimens being ample and prepared with exquisite neatness.—CHARLES E. BESSEY.

The Cell Nucleus.—The latest contribution to our knowledge of the plant cell nucleus is from the hands of Dr. Zimmermann of the University of Berlin. His "*Morphologie und Physiologie des pflanzlichen Zellkernes*" is destined to be one of the most useful of books, for in it he has brought together what has been made out as to the nucleus both structurally and physiologically, for all groups of plants. In the first

part of his book he takes up methods, chemistry of the nucleus, histology of the nucleus, nuclear division (karyokinetic and direct division), physiology of the nucleus, etc. In the second part the subject is taken up from the systematic standpoint, the structure and division of the nucleus being discussed for each group of plants, e. g., Angiosperms, Gymnosperms, Pteridophytes, Bryophytes, Fungi, Algæ and Schizophytes. The author has summarized the results of the investigations, and apparently given the essential facts. In all cases he makes a direct citation of the particular paper to which he refers, thus enabling the student to verify the statements made by the author. It must not be supposed, however, that the work is a mere compilation; on the contrary the author has wrought into it a great deal of his own matter, so the book is full of fresh material. It will at once find a place in every laboratory, and we hope will be made still more useful by a good English translation.—CHARLES E. BESSEY.

Another Australian Curiosity.—Some time since we reviewed an article on a strange Australian fungus which appeared to be a peculiar edible sclerotium. A recent paper[2] describes what the authors call "a stone-making fungus" for which a new genus is erected. This genus appears to us, however, of doubtful validity, and illustrates a tendency to the multiplication of genera founded upon slight and unimportant characters, which is being carried to the extreme by many of our systematic botanists and which it seems to us should be condemned. *Laccocephalum* is said to differ from *Polyporus* "in being hard and woody from the first, in the peculiarly pitted pileus and in the character of the spores." The most striking peculiarity to the superficial observer, however, is a large stone like nodule at the base of the stipe. This has a diameter equal to or exceeding that of the pileus, and is apparently composed of sand agglutinated and held together by the mycelium into a mass resembling a concretion of ferruginous sandstone.

In the specific description there are apparently some typographical errors, as the spores are said to be "44–50 inches in diameter" (meaning μ probably) with spines "3 inches long" (μ?). The paper is accompanied by a good lithographic plate giving three views of one of the plants.—C. L. SHEAR.

[2] D. McAlpine and J. G. O. Tepper: A New Australian Stone-making Fungus (*Laccocephalum basilapiloides*), Proc. Roy. Soc. Victoria, 1894, Art. XIV.